

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Website Design and Development Services

RFP-BHA-2026-04-IT | Issued: April 20, 2026

Estimated Cost: \$25,000 to \$35,000

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS issued 5/13/2026

Platform & Technical Requirements

- Do you have a preferred CMS platform, or are vendors expected to recommend one?
 - **We prefer WordPress, but are open to discovering others.**
- Are there any hosting, security, or compliance requirements (e.g., government standards) that should guide platform selection?
 - **WCGA 2.1 Level AA and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act**

Property Directory & Data

- Where is property data currently maintained?
 - **Maintained within the website**
- Is there an API or structured data source available for property listings and availability?
 - **No. Manually Uploaded**
- Is real-time availability required, or would periodic/manual updates be acceptable?
 - **Periodic/Manual Updates are Acceptable**
- For Indigo-managed or external properties, will data access be available, or should these remain linked externally?
 - **External Links are Acceptable**
- Clarify the ideal user experience for accessing the indigo-managed properties
 - **The ideal experience for accessing any property site external, indigo or BHA is filtered by program. Allowing prospects/applicants to be directed to properties where program qualifications are front and center.**

Portal Integrations

- What level of integration is expected with SecureCafe and landlord portals (e.g., direct linking, embedded views, or deeper integration such as SSO)? There is a current 500 error when accessing.
 - **Direct Link**
- Are there any additional systems that should be considered for integration?
 - **Not at this time.**

Multilingual Support

- Should translations be automated or professionally provided?
 - **Automated for general web**
 - **BHA programmatic documentation is translated professionally. Thos will be direct linked to pdf files.**
- Will BHA supply translated content, or should this be included in the project scope?
 - **BHA Will Provide**
- Are languages beyond English and Spanish anticipated?
 - **No**

Appointment Scheduling

- Is there an existing scheduling system that should be integrated, or should a new solution be implemented?
 - **Integration with Microsoft Booking**
- Should appointments sync with staff calendars (e.g., Outlook or Google)?
 - **Yes**
- Are there multiple appointment types or workflows to consider?
 - **Applicant/Resident/Landlord**

Content & Migration

- Approximately how many pages and documents (e.g., PDFs, forms) should be accounted for?
 - **50 pages**
 - **100 pdf**
- Are there any security measures that should be implemented for documents and forms?
 - **Content Security**
 - **No Sensitivity labels**
 - **Data Loss Prevention**
 - **Encryption at Rest and In transit (Standard Best Practice TLS)**
 - **Migration Security**
 - **R.O.T. Analysis**
 - **Identity Mapping**

Branding & Design

- Is the expectation a full rebrand (new logo and identity) or a refinement of the existing brand?
 - **Refinement of Existing Brand, New Logo may be required.**
- Are there existing brand guidelines that must be followed?
 - **Not currently**
- Will there be internal stakeholder or board approvals required during the branding process?
 - **Yes**

ADA Accessibility & Compliance

- Are there ongoing accessibility monitoring or reporting expectations post-launch?
 - **Current W3C WCAG**

Hosting & Support

- Do you prefer vendor-managed hosting or an internal/government-hosted environment?
 - **Vendor Managed – (Currently Host is Cloudways)**
- What level of post-launch support is expected during the 12-month maintenance period (e.g., maintenance only vs. content updates and enhancements)?
 - **Content Updates and Enhancements**

Budget & Phasing

- Is the stated budget range flexible depending on scope (particularly for features like the unified property directory and integrations)?
 - BHA cost estimates of 25k-35k includes property directory and Microsoft Bookings, but does not include other potential integration yet to be discovered.

Is there a budget or budget range for this project that can be share with prospective vendors?

- BHA cost estimates of 25k-35k includes property directory and Microsoft Bookings, but does not include other potential integration yet to be discovered.

Specific to the “logo and re-branding” deliverables, will the vendor be asked to provide any collateral (other than the new website) that integrates the new logo? And is BHA seeking a full rebrand or more of a refresh of the current logo?

Refresh

To the best of BHA’s knowledge, is there an incumbent design partner that will be responding to this RFP?

No

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

RFP-BHA-2026-04-IT — Website Design and Development Services

This document contains BHA's official answers to all questions submitted by prospective vendors and is incorporated by reference into RFP-BHA-2026-04-IT. All other terms and conditions of the RFP remain unchanged. Proposers must acknowledge receipt of this Q&A; document in their Cover Letter.

PROJECT SCOPE & STAKEHOLDERS

1. Who are the primary key stakeholders and decision-makers for this project?

The Housing AUthority of the City of Bellingham. Primary decision-makers Housing Authority team tbd.

2. Are there any known limitations, issues, or technical debt in the current system that we should be aware of?

A: Yes. Section 3.2 of the RFP details the specific challenges identified during BHA's self-assessment: inconsistent property platforms across cloudwayssites.com and Indigo-managed domains, no unified property search or map, phone-only appointment booking, a thin landlord section, no multilingual support, and an outdated WordPress theme (2020) with brand inconsistencies between 'BWCHA' and 'BHA.' Additionally, the Q&A; notes a current 500 error when accessing the SecureCafe portal link.

See also the peer comparison table in RFP Section 3.3.

3. What level of stakeholder involvement is expected during design reviews, and how many design concept iterations and revision cycles should we plan for?

A: Approval is required during the branding process. Vendors should plan for internal stakeholder review cycles. The RFP requires a minimum of 2 homepage concepts (Section 4.4). The number of revision cycles is not specified; vendors should propose what they consider adequate and price accordingly.

Note: The RFP scope includes wireframes and responsive mockups for all audience sections.

DESIGN & BRANDING

4. For the 'style guide and brand system, including new logo,' should we provide comprehensive brand positioning (mission, voice, messaging strategy), or strictly a visual identity package (logo, typography, color palette)?

A: A refinement of the existing brand is expected. A new logo may be required. No existing brand guidelines are currently in place. The scope is a visual identity package (logo, typography, color system, style guide) as described in RFP Section 4.4. Full brand positioning (voice, messaging strategy) is not explicitly required. The logo deliverable is a refresh, not a full rebrand. Any collateral beyond the website is not in scope.

CURRENT TECHNOLOGY & CONTENT

5. Can BHA provide an overview of the current technical architecture, including infrastructure, application stack, integrations, and data flows supporting the existing website?

A: The current site runs on WordPress, hosted on Cloudways. Property data is maintained manually within the website — there is no API or structured data source. The SecureCafe resident/applicant portal and landlord portal are externally linked (direct link only; SSO is not in scope). Indigo-managed properties have standalone external websites. No additional system integrations are anticipated at this time.

6. Will BHA provide a complete content inventory, or should we scope content audit and mapping as part of our services?

The RFP lists 'content audit' as a Discovery & Strategy deliverable (Section 4.4), Vendors should include it in their project plan.

7. What is the approximate volume of content to be migrated (number of pages, documents, and media assets)?

A: Approximately 50 pages and 100 PDFs. No specific count of other media assets was provided. Migration security requirements include R.O.T. (Redundant, Obsolete, Trivial) analysis, identity mapping, data loss prevention, and encryption at rest and in transit (TLS standard).

8. Are there any existing accessibility audit reports for the current website?

The RFP requires a third-party accessibility audit (e.g., WAVE) prior to launch and ongoing post-launch monitoring to current W3C WCAG standards (Section 4.2). Compliance standards are WCAG 2.1 Level AA and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

9. Does BHA have a preferred CMS or technology stack for the new site?

A: BHA prefers WordPress but is open to other platforms. The current site uses WordPress hosted on Cloudways. BHA prefers vendor-managed hosting; Cloudways is the current provider but is not required for the new site.

PROPERTY DIRECTORY & SEARCH

10. For the unified property search across 35 properties, does BHA have an existing structured database or API that the new CMS can pull from, or should we scope for manual content migration and entry?

A: No API or structured data source exists. Property data is currently maintained manually within the website. Vendors should scope for manual content migration and entry. Periodic/manual updates are acceptable going forward.

11. How frequently does property data change, and what level of real-time or near real-time updates is expected?

A: Periodic/manual updates are acceptable. Real-time availability is not required.

12. Does BHA prefer a custom-built property search solution, or would a third-party plugin be acceptable? What filtering options and search functionality are required?

A: The budget of \$25,000–\$35,000 includes the property directory. The ideal user experience filters properties by program type, placing program qualifications front and center for prospects and applicants. For Indigo-managed and other external properties, external links are acceptable. See RFP Section 4.3 for the full list of required features (interactive map, radius search, bedroom count filter, accessibility feature filter, individual property detail pages).

13. Are there preferred mapping tools or GIS standards for the property search map functionality?

No mapping tool preference Vendors should propose their recommended solution as part of their technology stack description (RFP Section 5).

USER ACCOUNTS & PORTALS

14. Can you describe the current registration and login process? Does the site currently support third-party authentication (e.g., Google/Gmail)?

A: The RFP requires integration with the existing SecureCafe resident/applicant portal and landlord portal via direct linking only —no SSO or re-platforming of portals is in scope.

15. Regarding SecureCafe portal integration: should this include Single Sign-On (SSO) and/or API-based data passing, or is a seamless visual handoff via external linking sufficient?

A: Direct linking only. SSO and API-based integration are not required.

16. What level of role-based access control is required internally, and how many staff members will manage content in the CMS?

A: The RFP requires role-based access control with admin, editor, and author/publisher workflow roles (Section 4.2). The exact number of staff tbd; the RFP requires training for a minimum of 2 staff members at launch (Section 4.4).

17. What are the technical skill levels of internal users who will manage the CMS?

A: The RFP requires an 'intuitive backend enabling non-technical BHA staff to create, edit, and publish most content without vendor assistance' (Section 4.2). Training delivery method preference (onsite, remote, or

hybrid) was not specified; vendors should propose what is appropriate.

APPOINTMENT BOOKING & TRANSLATIONS

18. Should the appointment booking system integrate with internal calendars (e.g., Outlook or Google Calendar)?

A: Yes. Integration with Microsoft Bookings. Appointments should sync with Outlook calendars.

19. Should appointment booking require user authentication, or should guest access be supported?

A: Guest access support

20. Will BHA provide translated Spanish content internally, or should we include professional translation services in our proposal?

A: BHA will provide translated content. Automated translation is acceptable for general web content. BHA programmatic documentation is professionally translated and will be provided as directly linked PDF files. No languages beyond English and Spanish are anticipated.

GOVERNANCE & CONTENT MANAGEMENT

21. Are there content governance policies in place, such as approval workflows or publishing controls?

A: *The RFP requires role-based access control with an author/publisher approval workflow (Section 4.2).*

Vendors should design CMS governance accordingly.

22. What training delivery methods are preferred (onsite, remote, or hybrid)? Should training and documentation be provided in multiple languages?

A: *The RFP requires a minimum of 2 staff trained at launch with accompanying documentation (Section 4.4). Any of the delivery methods will work.*

HOSTING & SECURITY

23. Does BHA have a preferred hosting provider (AWS, Azure, Pantheon, GCP, or managed hosting)?

A: BHA prefers vendor-managed hosting. The current host is Cloudways. No specific provider is required for the new site. Minimum uptime guarantee is 99.5% (RFP Section 4.2).

24. Who currently manages hosting and support for the existing website, and what services do they provide?

A: The current host is Cloudways (vendor-managed). Maintenance and Suggested Improvements.

25. What are the expectations for backup frequency, disaster recovery, and incident response protocols?

A: The RFP requires automated data backup and recovery and guaranteed uptime of at least 99.5% (Section 4.2). Vendors should propose a specific backup schedule and disaster recovery approach in their Hosting Plan submission (RFP Section 5).

26. Are there specific security or compliance requirements that may impact system integrations?

A: Compliance requirements include WCAG 2.1 Level AA and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Document security requirements include: Content Security Policy, no sensitivity labels, Data Loss Prevention, and encryption at rest and in transit (TLS standard best practice). Migration security includes R.O.T. analysis and identity mapping.

ANALYTICS & SEO

27. Does BHA currently use Google Analytics or another analytics platform?

A: YES The RFP requires SEO optimization including meta tags, clean URL structure, and XML sitemap (Section 4.2). Vendors should propose an analytics solution as part of their technology stack.

28. Should SEO strategy and optimization be included as part of the scope?

A: SEO optimization is explicitly required per RFP Section 4.2 (meta tags, clean URL structure, XML sitemap).

PROPERTY DOMAINS & TRANSITIONS

29. Will the existing standalone property domains (e.g., homesatbridgecreek.com, pacificrimapartments.com) be sunsetted and redirected to the new unified bellinghamhousing.org, or will they remain active?

A: Direct linking to the standalone sites will remain.

The RFP requires individual property detail pages for all 35 properties within the new site, with clear distinction between property types (Section 4.3).

LICENSING & POST-LAUNCH SUPPORT

30. Does BHA currently license third-party scheduling software that should be integrated, or should we recommend, implement, and cover licensing costs for a new booking tool?

A: Integration with Microsoft Bookings. The \$25,000–\$35,000 budget estimate includes Microsoft Bookings integration. BHA is a Microsoft environment (Outlook calendar sync is expected), so Microsoft Bookings licensing is within BHA's existing Microsoft agreement.

Vendors should clarify licensing assumptions in their cost proposal.

31. What are the expected response times and service level agreements (SLAs) during the 12-month post-launch support period?

A: *The RFP specifies a 12-month maintenance plan including security updates, content support, and performance reporting (Section 4.4). Post-launch support scope includes content updates and enhancements, not maintenance only. Vendors should propose specific SLAs in their proposal.*

32. Should the first year of hosting costs and 12-month post-launch maintenance be included in the \$25,000–\$35,000 estimated project cost, or is there a separate operational budget?

A: The \$25,000–\$35,000 budget estimate includes the property directory and Microsoft Bookings integration but does not include other potential integrations yet to be discovered. The RFP requires an itemized cost proposal covering hosting (first year) and 12-month post-launch maintenance as line items (Section 5), implying these are within the stated budget range. Vendors should confirm their interpretation in their proposal.

No separate operational budget
